

Ep #77: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Brandy Faker



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 77, Widows Like Us: An Interview with Brandy Faker.

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, the only podcast that offers a proven process to help you work through your grief, to grow, evolve, and create a future you can truly look forward to. Here's your host, Master Certified life coach, grief expert, widow, and mom, Krista St-Germain.

Hey there. Welcome to another episode of the podcast. I've got a good one for you this week. Just had a lovely conversation with a widow and a mom who is just like us, and she's one of my clients. And she has a story that I think you are going to find relatable and encouraging and I just think you're going to love it.

So I am proud to present this interview with Brandy Faker, and also, before we jump into that, to remind you that I'm doing a giveaway because giveaways are fun and because I really want to reach a million widows with this podcast.

So if you would like to win a \$100 Visa card, then you can enter this contest as many times as you like between now and the end of December, simply by going to Apple Podcasts and reviewing the podcast, or going to social media and sharing the podcast.

You can do that on Instagram, where you can find me @lifecoachkrista, or on Facebook, where you can find me at Coaching with Krista. And when you do any one of these three things, review the podcast in Apple Podcasts, share it in Instagram or on Facebook, if you email support@coachingwithkrista.com, we will enter you into the contest for a \$100 Visa gift card.

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So every time you do it, email us, support@coachingwithkrista.com and we will get you entered. So the more you share, the better your odds. We're going to have fun. We're going to get this podcast in the hands of more widows like us who need it.

And then we get to spend some money, maybe on ourselves or on our family, or whatever it is we want to do. Alright, let's go ahead and jump into my interview with Brandy. Enjoy.

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Krista: So welcome Brandy, I am excited to have you on the podcast.

Brandy: Thank you. I'm excited to be here.

Krista: So for those who don't yet know you, I'll have you introduce yourself in a second, but the reason I wanted you to come on the podcast is because we've been coaching together now for a little over a year inside of Mom Goes On, and it's been really fun to watch your transformation.

And I know that sometimes the widowed mom experience feels very isolating, and so the more I can give other widows inspiring examples that are authentic, not super shiny and positive and unrealistic and happy-happy all the time, but true authentic examples the better. And I think you're going to do that today. So why don't you just start by introducing us? Tell us a little bit about Brandy.

Brandy: Okay. So my name is Brandy. I was born and raised in Georgia and went to nursing school, got out of nursing school, and decided to try something totally different. So I moved to Colorado, outside of Denver, with

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a friend that I graduated nursing school with, with the intent of it was only going to be a year.

That was kind of both of us. It's only going to be a year. We'll just check this out, do something different, might go back, might go somewhere else. Well, we're both still here and that was in 2003. So long time. Pretty crazy. Both still here.

And about four months after we moved out here, hence the reason I stayed; I met my would-be husband Todd. But I work as a nurse, I have worked all over town, different places, and now I actually even before COVID, work from home on an online nursing program, which is awesome. I love it.

I have two kids, they're eight, and I can't believe it, six now. And I live on a mini farm on five acres and I have three horses and dogs and a cat and a tractor and yeah, just living life.

Krista: The whole deal.

Brandy: The whole deal. And it's a blast. It's hard work, but it's a lot of fun.

Krista: So tell us a little bit about Todd and I'd love to hear what he was like before you tell us maybe this story about him. What was he like?

Brandy: When he walked in a room, everybody just gravitated to him. He was one of those. My daughter actually is like that too. I was more in the couple relationship like the one sort of the background. But he never met a stranger, he loved to help everybody. If he saw somebody that didn't have a coat or whatever, he'd just take his off and give it to them. Stuff like that.

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He had kept friends since third grade. And they were still really good friends. Did things together, went and visited each other, did guy trips together, stuff like that. So yeah, he was just great all-around guy. Great guy.

Krista: And tell us a little bit about how he passed, what led up to all of that, what that was like for you.

Brandy: So he was super healthy, never sick, so active. He was an amazing snowboarder, mountain biked, all this kind of stuff. So he came down with what I thought was a cold. Being a nurse, I'm like, it's just a cold, you'll be fine. And he didn't get better. And then he started getting really sick, and I thought, oh, he probably needs to go the hospital and get fluids. He's dehydrated.

Well, we go in there and they're like, we want to keep you for overnight observation because your kidney values look a little off, and I'm thinking, oh, it's just because he's dehydrated, this will be fine. Well, it wasn't fine. In four days' time, came back and diagnosed him with a rare form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Totally shocking because he was two or three weeks before mountain biking with friends, going to work every day. The stuff that everybody goes.

Krista: And your kids were how old at that time?

Brandy: The kids were three, our son was three, and our daughter was 10 months old. So he stayed in the hospital for a month and they did the chemo and all that stuff. Came home, and he was okay for two months. And then the following month after that, got sick again, had to go back in.

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Well, what happened was even more rare. It's only happened a handful of times. The cancer spread to his brain. This particular kind typically doesn't do that, but in his case it did. And he ended up coming back from all that. They gave him more chemo, a different kind, and it worked.

Everybody was shocked, he was able to come home. And then a week later, he was gone. And he ended up getting an infection because your immune system's real low, and he became septic. And that is what he passed from.

I mean, I say instead of the cancer, but it was really because of that. And oddly enough, through that whole journey with being a nurse and I was a critical care nurse, and I tried to control that entire situation. I questioned everything; I was super fanatic about infection control.

If I saw something a nurse was doing or a doctor and I thought oh, that doesn't look right, that could cause an infection, I would stop them. I had to say can you please wash your hands, change your gloves, whatever it needed to be. And it just is like, oh my gosh. And that's how he passed. The one thing that I was trying to control through the entire process was the one thing that...

Krista: Yeah, and the one thing that you compared to non-healthcare people would be aware of and informed about.

Brandy: Exactly, yeah. So we were in the hospital and even two days before he passed, he was up, eating, everything looked fine. And in about 24 to 36 hours' time, went from fine, thinking he's going to be able to go home to gone.

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Krista: And so what was then kind of your acute grief experience? What do you recall from the early days and at what point did you kind of, as I like to think about it, unfurl from the fetal position or start to kind of get your head above water?

Brandy: That took a long time but, in the beginning, it was just like, total shock. I remember right after he had passed, I mean, we're still in the hospital. It had just happened. This hospital worker walks in and she's like, I'm sorry for your loss, here's this packet of information. Do you know what funeral home you want to use?

I'm like, what? What are you talking about? How is this even happening? I just couldn't get over how is this happening. So yeah, and then the days after, when people found out, people from all over the country just flocked to our house.

I mean, he knew people all over. And it's like, two days or three days later, massive amounts of people are in my house. I mean, some of them I had met, some of them I had only heard about through all his stories and stuff, but it was so surreal.

And then I've got these two little kids, by this point, our daughter has turned one. So of course she doesn't know anything. And our son is like, mommy, why are all these people here and where's dad? It's like, oh my gosh, how do you explain this stuff? I can't even understand it, much less a three-year-old. Yeah, it was just - it was a crazy, crazy time.

Then, after we get past the services and all that, everybody goes home. People check on you for a little while, and then that stops. And I will say that I still have a handful of people, even people that really were his friends

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that now have become my friends, we still talk, they check on us, they'd do anything for us, which is amazing.

But the majority of people sort of went on about their merry way, which is okay. But it was - I don't even know. It was a long, long time. Probably several years before I was like, okay, this has happened. I just kept thinking, how is this my life? It's not supposed to go this way.

And I remember telling a friend it's like, this is like a story where it's a friend of a friend. Like you've heard about this story, but you don't actually know this person that it's happened to. That's the way I felt. But I kept thinking oh my gosh, this is me, I am now that person, this is now my story.

Krista: Was there a point that you remember where you felt like you moved from that kind of surreal place to acceptance? Or did you kind of dance with it back and forth?

Brandy: I mean, looking back, I think really, I probably did dance with it because I am super good - if I had a superpower, it would be being able to compartmentalize. Working as a nurse for so long, I developed this amazing way of separating myself from taking care of really sick patients.

And that just kicked in and took over. And so I was able to take care of the kids, I got them to school. I mean, six weeks after he passed, I started - same company, but I started a new position at work where I had to go through all these weeks of training and I just put on my game face because that's what I had done.

Any time anything happened in my past, that's what I had done. It's like, okay, this has happened, now I've got to figure out what's next. But in

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figuring out what's next, it wasn't I'm accepting what's happened. I was still thinking I cannot believe this has happened, I cannot believe this is my life.

But in the same sense, I knew or I kept thinking I don't have time to be sad, I've got to raise these kids, I've got to keep this house going and this five acres and I'm working full time. And another piece of the story is I'm an only child and my dad had health problems.

And my husband had actually talked to all of us into moving in together because I was going back and forth between my house and their house, caring for my dad, and then at the time, we'd had our first child. And so my mother was our babysitter.

So it was like, I was going there, and she was coming to our house. And he's like, it just makes more sense if just all move in together. And we're all like, what? Like, this is crazy. I cannot live with my parents and my parents were like, we don't want to live with her.

But anyway, he talked us all into it. So we bought a different house, we all moved in together, they have their separate spots and we have ours. And it just worked, but who knew that they were going to be the ones helping with him being sick and passing, instead of it being the other way around.

So I was like, oh okay, it's me, I've got to take care of two kids, this place, my parents, it's a lot. And just survival mode kicked in and that's what I did for years.

Krista: Before we started coaching together, did you do anything else for support? Therapy, any sort of group programs or anything else, or did you just go it alone?

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Brandy: I really just went at it alone. I remember a few days after he had passed, the church I went to, they have a grief share program, and they were having this grief share for the holidays or something like that. And they're like, oh, you should really come.

And I thought, oh my goodness. So I went, not - and I'm in this room of people and again, the thought kicked in, how am I here? How is this real? This should not be happening; I should not be here. So that one experience I was like, nope, that's not for me.

I've dealt with other life problems before on my own, and I'm going to deal with this one too. And the other thing I thought is I'm a Christian, I go to church, I read my Bible. That's enough. If I do those things, I will be fine.

Well, come to find out it was great and that piece of it was extremely supportive for me, but it wasn't enough. The other thing I did was about maybe six months or so into it, I thought okay, I have to do something that's just for me. And if I try to meet a friend for coffee or lunch or whatever, that is something that I can cancel, and I probably would have.

The day of or whatever, I would have said can't go, don't want to go, whatever. So I thought what's the one thing that I would be forced to do? And growing up, I had horses and loved them so much, and at that time, I didn't have any. So that is what I went back to.

Krista: I don't think I knew that because when we met, you had horses and I think my assumption was just that you always had.

Brandy: No. When we moved out here, we didn't get horses. We had the land, but we had no barn, no horses. So my dad was huge into horses and

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that's how I got into it. And anyway, I started talking to him about it and he was like, yeah, that might be a good idea. So he actually developed plans for a barn, we got a barn built, I found a couple horses and I bought those, and it was great.

And it still is great. That's my little oasis. And it's something I have to do every single day, twice a day, morning and night, if not more than that. My sort of space in the world. The kids are interested but they don't really go down there that often. So that is what I chose to do because of course, you can't cancel that. You've got to take care of them every day.

Krista: Though I remember and I want to know what switched for you, I remember when we first talked before you started coaching, I remember you were telling yourself you didn't have time to ride, right? And that was one of the major things you wanted to change, right?

Brandy: Exactly. And looking back now, and I didn't, or I didn't believe I did. I was still working full time, taking care of these two kids, of course now I've added horses into the mix. And my parents, well my mother - a few years after my husband passed, then my dad got diagnosed with lung cancer and he passed.

So by the time I had met up with you, it was me and my mom and my two kids. But yeah, I really wanted to ride. And I kept telling myself if I had more time to ride, then things will get better. The cloudiness of my mind will clear. The anger that I have will dissipate. It was like, everything was wrapped up in riding. I've just got to get on, I've just got to have time to ride and sort of clear my mind.

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But of course, when life happens, that's the thing that gets pushed because it's not something you have to do. You don't have to ride, but I do feel like I have to take care of my kids, I have to work to pay my bills, you know. So it just kept getting pushed and pushed and pushed. And then from that point, we had that initial phone call.

Krista: So what prompted that? Because I remember - sometimes I'll get on the phone with someone and never talk to them before, I have no idea what's going on, they filled out a questionnaire, but I really don't know them. But I remember not feeling that way with you because on social media, you had kind of been engaging with me and coming to lives and commenting on things.

And I felt like I kind of had an awareness of you that I sometimes don't. So what was that like? Your process to actually getting from not being aware that coaching was an option to deciding that it was for you or something you wanted to try?

Brandy: Yeah. Well I'm not a huge social media person, but after this happened, and you kind of talked about it in the beginning, but I felt very isolated because I looked around my world and I saw nobody else like me. The church that I went to, there was not even people that had been through a divorce there. They were all couples, or if they were widowed, they were much, much older.

So I suddenly overnight, it was like, could not relate to this group and they honestly sort of couldn't relate to me either, so I went on a search. And I got on social media and I found some groups. Widow groups, you can sign up. So I did that and one of them was your group, but there was a few others.

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And there was a noticeable difference between yours and the others. The others were like, negative, let's just talk about what's happened over and over and over, and I got to the point where I just couldn't go there anymore. And yours, people would talk about their loss, but then the things that you posted was like, you can still love your life. What if all the options were open to you?

And I'm thinking, okay, this is different. I like what she's saying, and I actually reached out to you via direct messenger and I asked about the coaching. And I was really on the fence about it and you wrote back and told me kind of how it was. And at the time it wasn't group coaching. It was...

Krista: I hadn't switched yet.

Brandy: Hadn't switched yet, and my mind kicked in and said you don't need that. Yeah, it said you don't need that. Again, here we go, you are a Christian, you go to church, you read your Bible, that should be enough. But there was this little piece of me that was like, but what if it's not enough?

I hear you, but what if it's not? What if there's something more? So this is typically the way I do things. I say well, let's just check and see. What does it hurt? What does it hurt if I just fill out the form and I just talk with her? That doesn't mean anything, that doesn't mean I'm signing up. It just means I'm talking to somebody.

So that's what I did. And before we got on the phone, I had never even heard of life coaching. I didn't have a clue what it was. So we get on the phone, we talk, and I remember us really talking about my thing was the

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time, the horses, riding, because again, I thought all my problems would go away if I had this me time.

And this was what got me. When you said I can help you, that was it. It was like, nobody else - at that point I was four years out, nobody else in my entire community had ever said I can help you. They had always said you're so strong, I'm so sorry, stuff like that.

But it was - it still felt so alone. Until you came along and honestly, you did not know me from anybody, and you said I can help you. And I said oh my gosh, she gets it, she's been there, she's done that, she's living her life, she's doing this to help the rest of us. Sign me up. And it's been amazing. It's been amazing since then. And the tears flow.

Krista: I know right, thanks a lot Brandy.

Brandy: Sorry. You know, it happens.

Krista: I do believe - I really don't think coaching is necessary. It's not a need. Because in grief, it's not like we're broken. I mean, we feel broken, but feeling broken is a part of grief. And so I never want anybody to think they need it. But what I know is coaching can get you where you want to go faster.

Coaching can take away some of the suffering. And so it's been so fun to watch you. What would you say have been some of the biggest changes that you've noticed in yourself?

Brandy: So when we had that first call, I really focused on the time with the horses, but there was another element to it, which was the anger. And I

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think we kind of touched on that a little bit in that call, but really, I was probably skirting around the issue until I really got into the coaching.

And specifically, my anger would come out with my kids. And I'm an only child, so I would sort of justify that as well, all parents get mad and angry with their kids. They get frustrated, they yell, they scream, this is normal.

But there was some sense in me that's like, yeah, but the way that you're behaving, this is not appropriate. I don't want to keep living like this. Because it would be simple things like just kid things. They spill water. I would just go crazy. I would just lose it.

And then that was actually rubbing off on my son and he, a simple thing like his sister doesn't want to play with him or whatever, he would have a meltdown that would last for four hours. I mean, we're talking about a full-on screaming, yelling, throwing, kicking tantrum that would go on for hours and hours.

Well to me, I thought oh he's got a problem. He's not handling this well. I've got to do something for him. It got to be so bad that - his anxiety got so high that I actually took him out of school. And I started homeschooling him, so add that to my plate of full time, all this, homeschooling now.

And I thought, well, if I do that, he'll be fixed. But he wasn't. So I go through the program and this starts coming out. My anger. And we start coaching on it and I'm working on it through the workbooks that you send us. And it finally sort of clicked with me that it's me. It's not him. It is me.

And once I implemented some of these tools that you teach us like you can choose the way that you respond, because I would just explode before I

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even sort of realized what I was doing. It was out there. And it's like okay, you don't have to do that. Yes, he's having a tantrum, you can choose a different way. You can choose to be calm here. You don't have to scream.

And once I started doing that, it was like, he just flipped a switch and all of that went away. And he does not yell and scream and pitch fits hardly at all. And it's really interesting because I notice in myself if I feel real anxious, then he will have a tantrum.

If I can get myself calmed back down, then he's totally fine. And I never realized that connection between a parent and a child. That they feed so much off of your energy. And you think you're hiding it, or I thought I was hiding it from him, which is funny now that I think about it because yelling at them is not hiding my anxiety or my anger. But that's what I thought at the time, but they can tell. They still can totally tell. And they feed right into it.

Krista: Yeah. And I never - before I decided to become a coach, I don't think I fully appreciated the ripple effect it was going to have. Because your son is not in the program. I'm not coaching him but it really is just for me personally I guess as a coach, it's really rewarding to watch the changes in the women that I have the privilege of working with, and then watch how their changes ripple into their families. And it's not going to stop with your son, which is what's so amazing.

Brandy: Yeah, it is amazing. And I try to teach them some of these things, like you can have two emotions at once and that's okay. That right there, explaining that to him was like, mind-blowing. He thought he has to be sad all the time. He didn't realize that oh, I can be happy and sad at the same time.

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I can enjoy whatever it might be, playing outside, and still miss dad. I don't have to always miss dad and just be really sad about that all the time. And that was a game-changer for him. I mean, I remember when it happened, when I taught him, and he's like, lightbulb moment. Like oh really?

And then I think, wow, all the things, stuff like that that we're never taught. We're never taught. We're never taught it. And I just think how exciting it is to now that I've learned all this stuff, to live my life in a different way in how I show up for them and what that's going to mean for them and the way that they grow up, and the way that they might show up when they have a family and children. And that ripple effect of how it will go down, hopefully generations after generation, all because of this. All because...

Krista: All because you decided to take a little chance. So what's the community aspect been like for you? Because you talked about feeling like you were on an island.

Brandy: It's been great. At first, when we first started, I was one of the original ones that signed up for the group coaching, so it was very solid...

Krista: My OGs.

Brandy: There was like, eight of us. We'd get on the Zoom call, we'd talk, we would chat back and forth. It was really great to know that there are other women out there walking a similar path. Even if we're spread out all over, you still know they're there.

And the community has grown. There's a lot more people that's joined, which is amazing, and in doing so, there is a handful of us that is around the Denver area. Like four, five of us.

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Krista: So fun.

Brandy: So we actually started...

Krista: And I don't know why, PS, why is just Front Range, Colorado? I don't know.

Brandy: I don't know. But we have actually started getting together. And that has been so great. And it's very low-key. It's just no stress. We went to one of the ladies' houses, we sat outside, social distancing of course. We sat there and talked.

Another time we went for a hike all together. Just hung out and talked. And it's like, my little peeps. My little peeps, they get me, it's so great. I just love it. I just love it, and we're going to continue to do that with each other. It's like when no one else in the world you feel like gets you, this group does.

Krista: I believe that's so true. And people sometimes I think they think one-on-one coaching is going to be more impactful than groups, but what I have found is there's something so powerful about normalizing all of these things that are just part of the struggle. Because I worked with so many women one-on-one and they always think there's something wrong with them.

They always think that they are the ones, or they should be farther along. So it's something even anger, which you mentioned you kind of skirted around when we initially talked, I mean, I'm just thinking of yesterday's call for example.

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When one person starts talking about how they feel angry, it just normalizes it for everybody else. And then we get to make so much progress faster because we can get past the it's just me kind of problem.

Brandy: Right, exactly. And you know, I tend to sort of keep to myself. And that was just another reason why I didn't do the grief share program and stuff like that. And I was a little bit apprehensive about joining a group coaching, even when it was just eight of us. Spilling all these feelings out to people I don't know who they are.

But it was so comfortable and exactly what you're saying. Once people started sort of saying I'm dealing with this, or I need help with that or whatever it might be, it was just a sense of relief almost. And as it's grown, it's not intimidating at all to get coached in front of these women because you - or at least for me, I think one of them might be going through the same thing.

Or they're getting coached and I think oh, I don't think that, or I can sort of tune this out because that's not really something that I deal with, and then either you or her that's being coached will say something and it's like, kaboom, no, that is me, that is what I think. Okay, pay attention, pay a little more attention to what they're saying because it's like you don't even realize it. You don't even realize oh yeah, I've had thoughts like that before too until someone else brings it up. It's crazy how that works.

Krista: I think there's also just something to the human brain's resistance to being coached sometimes. When you're the one in the hot seat, the brain can just be a little bit resistant to receiving the coaching. But when you're watching someone get coached, your brain is very open because we're not talking about your life.

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And then it seems like it's easier. Okay, so you did the initial group, then you went through and did the masters group. So you've already done the masters. And then you had a little epiphany, which was fun to watch you have. And now you're headed towards becoming a coach.

Brandy: Yeah, it just blows my mind. It just blows my mind. You know what, at this point in my life, I'm just going with it. That's sort of my new mantra. Just sort of go with it. I have always wanted to help people, became a nurse, did it that way. Always felt like I could do more. But I didn't know what that meant.

Then he passed away and oddly enough, there was somebody there with me at the hospital when he passed and she drove me home. A friend. She's like, you can't drive, I need to drive you home. So we're driving down the road and I remember exactly where we were when I said okay, I have got to figure out how to bring something good out of this.

And it's been a few hours, and I said it out loud to her, and I'm like, I have no idea what that means, but I've got to do something. It's like I'm trying to, I don't know, force a good out of a bad. So that's always kind of stuck with me. Then I go through the program the first six months, and then it was so amazing that the eight of us wanted more.

So we're like, Krista, give us more, we got to have more, we got to have more. So then we sign up for the next six months, so amazing. I mean, really life-changing stuff. And then I just, I don't know, it just came to me. I'm like, oh, what if I tried to go through the certification program? I could do that I think.

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And of course, then I'm like, could I do that? I don't know if I could do that. And I had all these reasons of why that is just a terrible idea. And I just thought like, I'm just going to do it. I'm just going to do it and see what happens. And so here we are.

Krista: Here we are.

Brandy: Here we are. So we'll see. The program hasn't started yet but I'm super excited about it. A little bit nervous of course, but...

Krista: You have a human brain; you're supposed to be nervous. You're doing something you've never done before. If you weren't nervous, I would be concerned.

Brandy: Well, don't be concerned because I'm nervous. But more than that, it's like I can be nervous, I can still go through this. I can stumble and fall and that would be fine. But this is what I think - this is my helping. This might be exactly what I've been looking for all this time, when I felt like even before he passed, when I felt like I could be helping people more than what I do. This could be it. We'll see.

Krista: I love it. It's been really fun to watch. I just literally sometimes shake my head when I think about what I do for a living, this work is powerful for all of those I get to do it with, but it's also just so powerful for me to witness it and be a part of it and watch someone's life change and then watch their kid's life change. crazy. Never saw that coming.

It's kind of like before Todd passed, you would have never seen any of this for yourself. I never saw any of this before Hugo died. Never. Was there

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anything, before we close, that you had wanted to tell people? Advice or anything you wish we had talked about?

Brandy: For so long, when I was following that social media of yours and you would say life can be good, you can love your life, even though this has happened. And I remember thinking well, how am I going to do that? Is that just a bunch of hocus pocus?

And now, going through the program, it really is real. I remember my mom even said not long ago, she's like, when you first signed up for that life coaching program, she's like, I thought that - she actually used the words hocus pocus. She said I thought that that was a bunch of hocus pocus and I just thought what is she doing now? Like oh my goodness, here we go on this crazy journey.

And now she said I am so glad you did that. You have completely changed. I mean, your whole demeanor, the way you look at things, everything has completely changed. And so I guess my one takeaway is yes, this horrible, horrific thing has happened, there are no words to describe how awful it is. But yet, you can still make choices that make your life wonderful even though this thing has occurred, which is great, right? If we didn't have that, where would we be? I would be right back...

Krista: Settling for a mediocre new normal is where most of us would be. Going through the motions.

Brandy: Yeah, you got to get used to your new normal. And I just am so thankful every day that I listened to that little, small voice that said just talk to her on the phone and see what she says. And going back to reading my

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Bible, being a Christian and all that, once I got into the program and I really started changing, I thought - it was like a lightbulb.

I was like, oh my goodness, yes, I have all of that, but I really think that god sent me on this path to find your program. It's like, this is what I needed. It wasn't that I had to go at it alone with church and a Bible and my faith. Yeah, I can bring that along, put it into this program, and come out amazing. It's been great.

Krista: Yeah. And the reason and then we can close, but the reason you have experienced so much change isn't just because of the program. The program is there, but you have worked it. You have shown up to the calls. You have allowed yourself to be coached and you have been coachable, and you have done the work on yourself.

It's not like a magic pill where you just pay and then poof, everything changes. It's not that at all, and that's why I think the transformation for you is just so obvious because you did the work.

Brandy: Yeah, I did the work. And you know, there was some of the work I, to be honest, didn't want to do. And when that crept in, I knew that that was an area that really needed work. It's like - and even for a while way on into the program, I remember thinking like, I'm not going to model thought - I don't need to model thoughts. I got this.

And it's interesting because I really didn't have it. My brain was just telling me, you're good now, we're good, you don't need to keep doing this, we're good right where we are. And I believed it for a while.

Krista: What made you switch? What made you decide that you did want it?

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Brandy: I realized that I started falling back into those patterns, into the anger patterns, into the frustration, into the thoughts of I don't have enough time, so I would whiz around the house like a crazy person trying to get all this stuff done. And again, where do I see it? It comes out in my son. The way he acts.

And then when he started sort of with the tantrums again, I thought okay, what's gone wrong here? We were so good for so many months, and now we're not and what is it? And then I realized, oh, I've been telling myself you're good with the program, with the work, you don't need to keep doing the thought work.

And then when I got back into it, the way that I showed up for him changed and then therefore he changed. And I'm glad I went through that process because otherwise, it just sort of verified for me yes, this works, this is working, and you need to keep doing it. You just can't stop. You can't think or I don't want to think I got this, I'm good, I can just do models in my head or I can - I don't need to do the thought work.

Krista: Yeah, it is something that - I don't think you have to be in a program for the rest of your life, but mind management, emotional management, it does take purposeful effort. And if we can set ourselves up with the tools that we need and a routine that works for us and continue to prioritize our own mental wellbeing in that way, then we will reap the benefits, which you are.

Brandy: Exactly.

Krista: Thank you so much for coming on the podcast.

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Brandy: Thanks for having me. It was fun.

Krista: Totally a pleasure. Alright, I'll talk to you soon.

Brandy: Sounds good.

Krista: Bye, Brandy.

If you like what you've been hearing on this podcast and want to create a future you can truly get excited about, even after the loss of your spouse, I invite you to join my Mom Goes On coaching program. It's small group coaching just for widowed moms like you where I'll help you figure out what's holding you back and give you the tools and support you need so you can move forward with confidence.

Please don't settle for a new normal that's less than what you deserve. Go to coachingwithkrista.com and click Work With Me for details and next steps. I can't wait to meet you.